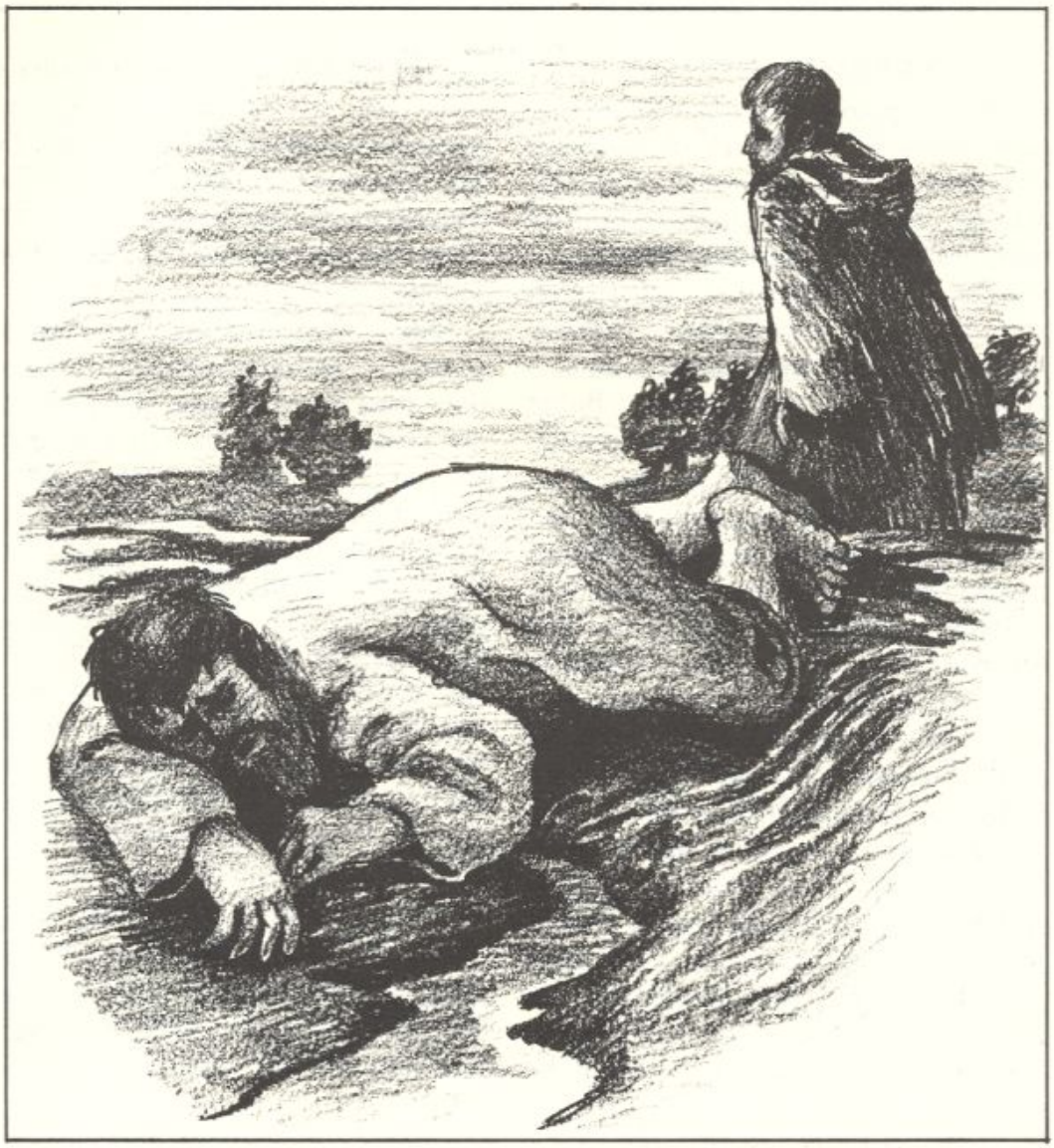
RESTORATION REVIEW



If we have known the joy of liberation, what shall we do for those who lie in the rut of blind guidance? Shall we "pass by on the other side"?

Volume 6, No. 9 **November, 1964**

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MID-POINT OF REVELATION

The respected Jewish philosopher and theologian, Martin Buber, has charged that modern man believes neither in a supernatural origin of history nor in a purposive unfolding of history. God is virtually irrelevant to the affairs of everyday life and in international relations. Modern man suffers from this kind of atheism, Buber says, because he believes in no midpoint of revelation.

By this Buber means that man cannot believe that God may suddenly, as one reads the Bible with a searching heart, speak to him regarding the vital issues of contemporary life. The result is that man reads the Scriptures these days with antiquarian interest, if he reads it at all.

Does God speak to man directly and immediately in our day? Notice how I said *in our day.* This is precisely Buber's point: men no longer believe in God's living presence. God once did this or that, but He does so no longer. Religion must have been vital and exciting to Elijah or Paul, for the Spirit of God was a living reality in their lives. All He does these days is through the cold print of a book. Get full of that book and you get full of the Spirit! This is a view all to common. We may be disbelievers without realizing it.

Buber's reference to "the midpoint of revelation" raises some critical questions for Christian faith. If we say that the Lord speaks to us as we read His word searchingly, just what do we mean by this? Is it that He gives us information supplementary to the Bible, or is it illumination of what is already written? Our hearts should leap with joy in either case! The average church member seems to be of that disposition that expects nothing in particular to happen when he reads the Bible and says his prayers. There is no midpoint of revelation (or illumination) in the lives of most of us.

If we look to the Bible and to the Lord for answers to the crucial problems facing our world, then we must believe that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." Can not Jesus be as real and 'precious, and as near, to me as He was to the woman who touched the hem of His garment? Cannot power flow forth from Him into my life with as much vitality as it did to that sick woman who struggled but to touch Him?

While there may be some hazards in the view that God does indeed reveal Himself to our hearts, we should give serious thought to Dr. Buber's invitation to the midpoint of revelation.

To this end we list a few scriptures for your careful study, trusting that you will look at them from a fresh perspective.

> "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3:30)
>
> "Pray at all times in the Spirit." (Eph. 6: 18)
>
> 'Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints." (Eph. 1: 18)
>
> "Let those of us who are mature be thus minded; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal that also to you." (Philip. 3: 15)
>
> "All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God . . . When we cry, 'Abba! Father! *it* is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8: 14, 16)
>
> "How precious to me are thy thoughts, a God! How vast is the sum of them. If I would count them, they are more than the sand. When I awake, I am still with thee." (Psa. 139:17, 18)

A STRANGE SUGGESTION

I could hardly believe my eyes when I read from Father Daniel J. O'Hanlon, S. J., in *America*, the national Catholic weekly, the suggestion that Roman Catholics visit the services of the Pentecostals. It may be a longtime yet before I find suggestions like that in the Church of Christ press, and one might not find such in the Pentecostal publications, but I rejoice to find leaders in the Roman church thinking so freely. It is especially noteworthy that the priest thinks his people will learn how to be better Christians by getting acquainted with the Pentecostals, who have so much to offer the Christian world.

Father O'Hanlon sees the Pentecostals as "the fastest-growing group of Christians in the world." He is especially impressed with their impact among Latin American peoples. In Chile the Pentecostals have gained more than one-half million in just a few years. There are 112 churches in Beuenos Aires alone. New York City has 250 Spanish-speaking Pentecostal churches. Four out of every five Protestants in all Latin America are Pentecostal. Even in Italy their churches have grown in number from 120 to 300 in a single decade.

The priest notes that Roman Catholics look at the Pentecostals with amusement while the Protestants keep their distance with hardly a good word to say for them. And yet they are appealing to the very ones to whom the Lord addressed Himself, the poor and the

dispossessed. He sees Pentecostal religion, which manages to be pretty much the same around the world despite its loose organization, as a natural response to certain basic human needs.

He points to the security and the sense of belonging that one feels with these people. One convert to the Pentecostals told the priest: “I used to go to the Catholic Church, but there nobody knew me . . . now, in my church, they call me sister.” The Roman Catholics who visit Pentecostal services “will find much to admire and possibly a few things to imitate,” the priest insists.

The visitor will see that each new convert becomes a real part of an intimately united community, the churches being small enough that everyone knows each other by name. During the services each one feels free to speak of his most personal problems and experiences before the group. Each is encouraged to give vent to his feelings. The hymns are spontaneous as in a family songfest. He sees the vertical dimension as strong, for the people are united in the Spirit and with each other, but the horizontal dimension is weak in that their sense of responsibility to the larger human community is often stunted.

One important lesson we can all learn from the Pentecostal, the priest urges, is that it is still the poor in spirit who are open to God’s grace and to the love of other men, and these are usually not rich in this world’s goods. He sees the poverty and simplicity of the gospel hard to preserve in modern America. Unless these virtues are cultivated a cold, hard shell grows around our hearts and keeps God from us and keeps us from our brothers. He points to the fact that the pope has called for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to restore the church to the freshness and simplicity she had at her birth.

Father O’Hanlon criticizes his own church by reference to some statements made by a visiting prelate from Chile. The visitor referred to the Roman Catholic Church in America as mechanical, external, and anonymous; it destroys intimacy and human personality. The American church is efficient, but what good is efficiency if you have to treat people as objects and machines?

O’Hanlon goes on to list other things that Roman Catholics can learn from Pentecostals: we can learn that in addressing God as Father and Christ as Saviour emotion is normal and natural, and that it finds its natural outlet in the company of our brothers in Christ. He thinks nothing would so revive his people as congregational singing such as goes on in Pentecostal churches. He doesn’t like the tag, despite its truth, that makes the main difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants that Protestants pray slow and sing fast while Catholics sing slow and pray fast.

He finds still more that his people can learn: being a Christian must set us apart from the world. While Roman Catholics need not imitate the Pentecostals in thinking that smoking and card playing are sinful, they need to come to terms with the fact that the real Christian cannot be conformed to the spirit of the world. He observes, quoting another

Roman Catholic, that “the greatest obstacle preventing people from becoming Catholics is not the scandalous lives of the few, but the frightfully mediocre lives of the many.” He says the Catholics look and act like everyone else. He calls for the courage to be different.

Last of all, the priest points to the enthusiasm that the Pentecostals have for the second coming of Christ, a thought that has the power to transform our lives. He asks his people: “Does the vision of the triumphant coming of the risen Christ have any serious impact on our lives as Christians.

Father O’Hanlon, who is a professor of theology, observes that dialogue between Roman Catholics and Pentecostals is more difficult than with traditional Protestant churches because of the formidable social and cultural barriers, A parish priest has no problem making friends with the Presbyterian pastor, They may even play golf together. Their social and cultural background is similar. But not so with the Pentecostal minister, who may be a factory worker. “The Spanish-speaking minister of a small storefront church in a New York slum is not likely to join the alumni of Union Theological Seminary and the Pontifical Gregorian University for theological discussion in the pastor’s study over a glass of sherry:”

This delightful piece in *America* by a courageous priest is indeed heartening to those of us who are eager to see more dialogue between all disciples of Christ. Whoever heard of such a thing as a Roman priest suggesting that his people go to the Pentecostals in order to learn how to be better Christians! When I read his article to my wife she remarked, “He’s liable to get himself into trouble!” But I reminded her that it would be just as strange for one of our Church of Christ ministers to give such advice, and he would be just as likely to get himself into trouble if he did. Can you imagine one of our ministers advising his congregation to visit the Baptists or the Lutherans in order to learn more about how to be a Christian? This kind of self-criticism is rarer among us than it is among the Roman Catholics. Well, after all, if we already have all the truth and if we are *it,* why go looking anywhere’ else? Let them come to us and learn!

A DANGEROUS ENTERPRISE

There is occasionally that person in history that gives himself to the task of causing other people to think. It is always a dangerous enterprise. Socrates, called “the gadfly” by his irritated contemporaries, is a notable example of what happens to the man who stimulates people to think. The old philosophers urged people to “Know thyself,” believing as he did that ‘The unexamined life is not worth living.” This enterprise led to his death. He was made to drink the hemlock, not because he was a criminal, but because he disturbed the *status quo.* He dared to show people they were petty and superficial, that they were indeed *fakes,* and for this he had to be destroyed.

From the hemlock to the cross, four hundred years of history, the story is the same. The penalty for urging self-integrity is resentment and rejection. Plato was imprisoned and Aristotle went into a self-imposed exile "lest the people sin again against philosophy." There is the roll-call of the prophets: which one was not persecuted? Jesus was crucified because he did not conform to the demands of orthodoxy. His sin was in being different. It may be all right to let people *think* they think, but it is fatal to cause people to become truly critical of themselves and of the institutions that look to them for support. Billy Sunday had a way of slapping his Bible across his knee and shouting, "Let us not forget that it was religion that killed Jesus!"

It is better to say that it was an institutionalized religion that killed Jesus; that is, a religion that was more concerned for preserving its parties and institutions than in cultivating the human spirit. Jesus was a threat to such institutions in that he sought to make men free, to deliver them from the machinations of man. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" is one of the great principles of human history, but an orthodoxy that depends upon holding men's minds in its grasp cannot tolerate freedom of thought. Jesus had to go. Orthodoxy could not stand him.

Causing men to think is indeed dangerous business. Look what happened to Bruno and Wycliffe and Galileo. Such men are the "heretics" of history. Some they burned at the stake, others they imprisoned, and still others were excommunicated. And what was their wrong? Thinking and causing others to think!

This journal attempts in its very limited way to encourage more thought among our people, and we rejoice over the signs that a few minds are being stirred. We are glad that more able men are willing to get into the act of creating thought by writing critical essays. Others are waiting in the wings, looking for the right opportunity to make their contribution. Whether or not such ones choose to make any use of this journal, we wish for them God's richest blessings in their quest for liberty.

However each of us chooses to work for more free dialogue, it is important that we remember that the search for freedom is both tedious and difficult. It has always been so. It is the nature of orthodoxy to resist change. Partyism must oppose the open mind for the sake of its own survival. Institutionalism cannot tolerate honest criticism. All these forces --- orthodoxy, partyism, institutionalism --- make the stimulation of thought a dangerous enterprise. Orthodoxy has the assurance and conviction of being right, based upon a long tradition; partyism has the power to make one a hero or a heretic, rejecting or receiving on the grounds of one's loyalty to the party; institutionalism has the positions, the jobs, and policy-making powers, including the ability to destroy whatever threatens it.

There is no question as to what side the money, the honors, the pulpits, and the jobs are on. The one who dares to offer honest self-criticism is certain to be cut off by these forces. He must refrain himself if he intends to get along. It is freedom in Christ that these forces

cannot bear; it is the non-party mind that they cannot stand. Freedom is the undoing of these forces.

Yes, the one in quest of free thought is engaged in a dangerous enterprise. In terms of "power politics" it is not merely dangerous, bur calamitous. One's own future in the party, not to mention his financial support, is lost. It all depends on what one wants in this life. Look what Luther could have been in the Roman hierarchy if he had played it safe. So with all those who changed the existing order. Orthodoxy would have embraced them and honored them had they so chosen. Plato issues the complaint that the very qualities that makes one an instrument for freedom likewise equips him for the allurements of the world. The reformers could have had the best jobs that orthodoxy had to offer. Thank God they did not so choose!

This enterprise that we concede to be dangerous in terms of worldly honors is really the most rewarding work in the world. God's blessings attend the one who truly yearns for the liberty of the saints. The Holy Spirit strengthens and comforts him who dares to stand alone against the forces of bondage. It is a sweet experience to see one break free from the shackles of exclusivism, legalism, and obscurantism. Freedom is its own reward. And yet it means so much more when one realizes that God, who knows how to bless and honor as no man does or can, will crown with glories unspeakable the one who chooses the freedom that is in Christ.

> "Plant your feet firmly therefore within the freedom that Christ has won for us, and do not let yourselves be caught again in the shackles of slavery." (Gal. 5: 1)

WORD FROM PAT HARDEMAN

Many of our readers will remember Pat Hardeman, a highly promising Church of Christ minister and professor at Florida Christian College who defected to the Unitarians a few years ago. It was quite a shock to many brethren that such a bright and gifted man would walk out on us like that and go to the Unitarians, of all places!

The reactions at the time appeared to be a mixture of disbelief, chagrin, and insult, along of course with sadness. We are convinced that thousands will always be interested in brother Hardeman's personal welfare, trusting that he is happy and busy in some worthwhile pursuit. For this reason we share the news that we have from him in a recent letter.

Pat is presently engaged as the Project Director for the Community Service Foundation in Florida, which is a private foundation helping underprivileged people. He reports that "the work is challenging and heartwarming." He is at present working on the President's Task Force planning the War on Poverty. He serves as consultant to this group.

While our exchange of letters did not involve discussion of religious views, Pat did volunteer the statement that "I cannot refer to 'Churches of Christ' as 'our people' as you do in your letter."

However this may be, we join many others in wishing for Pat the very best in life, and that the Father will richly bless him and lead him to *truth*, wherever that may be in his life. A lot has happened to both Pat and this editor since we shared the platforms in public debates in Kansas City and Nashville. I loved Pat then and love him even more now. And I probably disagree with him more now than then!

Some of us are urging Pat to write the story of his change, telling why he did what he did, for what it might mean to those of us he left behind, and also because he was a part of an important period in our history. He is a character in one of the chapters of the Restoration Movement, and it is only proper that he should leave a legacy to that Movement on why he made the decisions that he did. We are happy to report that he is considering doing just that.

ON CHRISTIAN COLLEGES

Back in 1960 this journal published an assay by Robert R. Meyers on *Church of Christ Colleges: Anything Wrong:* While this issue is no longer available, we do have a few reprints of Myers' article at ten cents each.

Now comes a lengthy review of Meyers' essay by Prof. James D. Bales of Harding College, the college where Meyers himself taught for several years. *Certain Criticisms Concerning Christian Colleges* by James D. Bales, a 27-page mimeographed booklet, which is attractively done, is free for the asking (Sta. A, Searcy, Ark.), but you should send a six cent stamp to cover postage.

We welcome this response from Prof. Bales. We wrote that we regret its length made it impossible for us to run in *Restoration Review,* but that we could find space for a summary if he would like for us to. While brother Bales made no request for space for a reply, we think it only fair that our readers be informed of the review and be encouraged to send for it.

''THE WONDROUS STORY"

Wayne Poucher, nationally known radio and television personality, as well as a minister of the gospel, has begun a new radio series known as "The Wonderful Story." Brother Poucher is widely known and respected for his performance on *Lifeline* from Washington, a program that comments on American culture and politics. This new program will be strictly religious, consisting of choral singing, Bible readings, excerpts from renowned spiritual leaders.

It is possible for your congregation to support Poucher's program on your own local station. The charge is very reasonable, and the good it may do is incalculable. For further information write to Wayne Poucher at Box 310, McLean, Virginia.

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SEMINARY IN DISGUISE AT ABILENE

Years ago I heard the president of Dallas Theological Seminary make the remark that someday the Church of Christ would have seminaries of its own. At that time I was both orthodox and naive enough to say, "Ole boy, you just don't know the Church of Christ, for we'll never have a *seminary."* The president and I were both right, however, though in different respects. He realized that the Church of Christ, like all religious denominations, would eventually cultivate those institutions and programs that would promote its own peculiar interests, and that this would call for all sorts of co operative agencies and such educational facilities as colleges and seminaries. This invariably happens to churches as they grow older. The Quakers are an exception, the reason being that they have no clergy.

But I was right too, or at least I think I was, for it is unlikely that the Church of Christ will ever organize an institution that will be *called* a seminary. "Pepperdine' Divinity School" or "Abilene Theological Seminary" are highly unlikely possibilities. Bur this does not mean that our people cannot and do not have seminaries — in disguise perhaps. This may be more cowardly and inconsistent than the way our brethren in the Christian Church do it. They have seminaries, of course, and designate them as such. The time was when we listed these pastoral-training institutions as digressive, along with organs and missionary societies.

The truth is our people already have many of the things that we once branded as digressive, and as we get older we will probably have even more of them, including instrumental music and missionary societies. The organ is already in the chapel of some of the larger churches, and missionary societies exist at least in their embryonic stage in the form of college lectureships and in such centralized programs as Herald of Truth. Such items as carpeting, tinted windows, elaborate pulpit furnishings, tall steeples with a cross, luxurious edifices (instead of meeting houses), resident ministers, kitchen facilities, recreation halls, educational plants, and even "the sanctuary" have long been accepted. And there is more to come. As to whether this is good or bad is not the point of this editorial. Maybe these changes are good for *us,* and maybe not. My point is to remind ourselves of what is happening and to issue a plea for integrity. It is childish to want to eat the cake and have it too. We have had a way of conforming to the denominations around us, and yet insisting that we are not a denomination. While we issue the claim of being *the*

true New Testament church, we are constantly at work cultivating all the trappings of the modern religious world, clandestinely sometimes.

If we are going to have seminaries and missionary societies, let us go ahead and recognize them for what" they are, and quit trying to kid ourselves that we are "loyal" because we don't have these marks of the beast like "the sects" have. Shakespeare spoke wisely in reminding us that "A rose called by another name is just as sweet." Or to put it another way in view of what is going on Out in Abilene: "A seminary secretly contrived is nonetheless realized."

Abilene Christian College has announced plans for an S. T. B. degree, a program of three years of graduate study for ministers of the gospel. The curriculum will compare with those in the seminaries across the country. While the ACC program will be within the framework of the Graduate School, it will for all intents and purposes be a seminary. Even the S. T. B. degree is typical of the one offered by some eminent seminaries and schools of divinity.

There is something a bit amusing about the name of the degree, however, though I do not intend to be poking fun. I just want us to be honest with ourselves. While the S. T. B. is standard nomenclature for such a seminary program (Harvard, for instance, offers the S. T. B. for the three years of study in its Divinity School), it stands for *Bachelor of Sacred Theology.* Most seminaries call their degree the B. D., standing for *Bachelor of Divinity.*

If ACC is going to offer the usual seminary degree (and that is what they are going to do), can they afford to call it what the denominations call theirs? Imagine a Church of Christ college offering a degree in theology or divinity! The task at ACC is to do the same thing, but to call it something that will not cause the brotherhood to come tumbling down upon them. And yet the degree should be so designated that those who receive it would not always be having to explain it. If it could have the very same initials as other seminary degrees (S. T. B. or B. D.), and yet *not* have those awful terms *theology* and *divinity,* they would then have it made.

I commend my ACC brethren for their ingenuity if not for their candor. The S. T. B. degree they will offer means *Bachelor of Sacred Knowledge.* But why would this not be called S. K. B., and whoever heard of a divinity degree with such crazy letters? Ah, here comes the genius of the ACC faculty (they didn't go to the big divinity schools for nothing!): in the Latin term *Scientiae Theologicae Baccalaureus* they get their S. T. B., which they can translate as Bachelor of Sacred Knowledge. The Latin really has our word *theology* in it, but let us not mar ACC's clever maneuver with such a trifle. I figure they will barely squeak by with that word *sacred,* which really isn't one of our terms. For the present they might get by with teaching *sacred knowledge.* In another generation they might go on and call it *theology.*

Since the days of Campbell our people have been uncomfortable with such terms as *divinity* and *theology.* Campbell wrote *it* into the charter of Bethany College that theology could never be taught. So Bethany College doesn't teach theology, but Christian Doctrine instead! ACC wants to offer a divinity degree, the regular S. T. B. program, preferably using the very same initials for the degree, but they dare not call *it* theology or divinity. So they come up with *Scientiae Theologicae Baccalaureus,* a new thing under the sun *in* the world of divinity. By putting such a program in their Graduate School they have what is in essence a theological seminary without really having one!

I hold my hat in hand in the presence of this kind of prudence. I have a new respect for their wit. Like the Sophists of old the ACC brethren prove themselves worthy of their craft *-priesthood* I suppose we'll have to say now that they are in the S. T. B. business.

A point of interest *in* all this is that former Dean Douglas Horton of Harvard Divinity School was invited to the campus by the ACC officials to advise them on this new program. The dean is quoted as saying: "The time is coming when the pews of the churches will demand for their pulpits the best education possible." It strikes me as most consistent that the Church of Christ have *its* own seminaries if it is going to have pews and pulpits and clergy and laity. One principle that initiated the Restoration Movement was the priesthood of all believers — that *all* were to be trained as ministers of Christ. If we have reached that place where some of us belong in the pew while only the professional ministers belongs at the sacred desk, let us have divinity schools too.

Cut the pie as you will, surely a new day has dawned when a Church of Christ college will call in a dean of a theological seminary to advise them in setting up a program for the training of gospel preachers. Even with my strong vision of things to come I would never have dreamed that such a thing would have happened in my day. What *would* old J. D. Tant say about this if he would look at a kitchen in the church and cry, "Brethren, we are drifting!"?

Knowing Dean Horton as I do, I cannot help but wonder what he thinks of a college that makes it a policy to employ no one to the faculty except those of its own religious persuasion. Every faculty member at ACC is a member of the Church of Christ — the *right* Church of Christ at that. Even a mathematician or a foreign language teacher has to belong to the right church in order to be on the faculty of this liberal arts college. And now with a seminary program underway the 23 men that make up the Bible faculty will all be Church of Christ preachers themselves. Dean Horton knows that he would hardly find the like to this anywhere in the world, unless perhaps at a Roman Catholic seminary or a Missouri Synod Lutheran theological institution.

ACC needs to realize that they will not impress the learned world with such parochialism. Something is wrong with an institution that would have to fire a dedicated faculty member who happened to decide that he could find more nurture for his soul at a

Christian Church than a Church of Christ. He would have to resign from a liberal arts faculty because he started going to church somewhere else!

In one respect, however, ACC is justified in having a graduate program for ministers with an all-Church of Christ faculty. The intention is to make Church of Christ ministers. So it is with seminaries: they create men after their own order, to preach their own brand of orthodoxy. If you are making priests for a particular ecclesiastical point of view, then there is no need for cross-fertilization of ideas or a dialogue of dissenting views.

Dean Horton spoke of the Restoration Movement while advising ACC (I just can't get over it, the dean of a divinity school on the campus of one of our "Christian Colleges" advising our "Christian educators" how to train "gospel preachers"! It is almost too much for me to bear all at once!): "I see no reason why the program should not become a spearhead for the Restoration Movement in its intellectual dimension in your part of the world."

I am unimpressed, though Dean Horton does sometime impress me. I would remind the dean that the Restoration Movement had its greatest impetus during a period when it had neither seminaries nor clergymen. The seminary at ACC is more likely to serve as a spearhead for a new clericalism in the Churches of Christ than it is to promote the interest of a real Restoration Movement. If, as the historian Mosheim observed, the first theological seminary in Alexandria, Egypt was "the grave of primitive Christianity," I am at a loss to see how the latest seminary to be established at Abilene, Texas can be the spearhead for the revival of primitive Christianity.

It is not theological seminaries that our Movement needs, but we can use many congregations that are dedicated to the idea of the priesthood of all believers, that will provide training programs for all believers. Every Christian is to enter the ministry, and in this sense I favor every congregation becoming a "seminary" for the development of the talents of all.

It is in this context that I commend these words from Harry Emerson Fosdick to Dean Horton and the brethren at Abilene:

"In recovering Christianity as a layman's religion we are getting back to the place where Christianity started. Neither Jesus nor any of His disciples were members of the priesthood or the clergy. They were laymen, all of them. The Master, a layman Himself, talked nothing but layman's language. Moreover, early Christianity was spread across the Roman Empire, not by the clergymen, but by laymen who translated the gospel into terms of daily life."

As for "the intellectual dimension" of which the dean spoke, we have noble instances in the pioneers of our Movement. The Campbells, Stone, Scott, Richardson, Raccoon Smith, and Milligan were men of intellectual grace without being intellectualists, and they were devout biblicists without being bibliolatrists. They rose above intellectual pride and

gave themselves humbly to the foolishness of preaching. Seminaries just don't produce men like those old pioneers. A seminary is a *professional* establishment designed to produce a *professional* clergy. The Restoration Movement does not need such products. As one who has had considerable experience in seminaries it is my conviction that they produce more pride than they do piety. They would be better if they were not clerical. I would be more sympathetic with a seminary for "laymen." I agree with Elton Trueblood when he points out that one of our greatest inconsistencies is that Protestantism does not have a single seminary for laymen while claiming to believe in the priesthood of all believers.

In my graduate training I took two seminary degrees, a B. D. from Princeton Seminary and the S. T. M. (Master of Sacred Theology) from Harvard Divinity School before going on for a Ph. D. For the sake of the record, if anyone happens to be interested, I would not choose "the seminary route" toward the Ph. D. if I had it to do over. I would spend all the time in the university itself. I mention this to show that there is some background on my part for these evaluations. I am a great believer in a university education for those who plan to serve in the kingdom of God, though I now have serious misgivings that seminaries make any real contribution to Restoration principles. I oppose the underlying philosophy more than the curriculum.

I do not intend that this editorial be a judgment against seminaries as much as a warning against our own self-righteousness and intellectual pride. We must not deceive ourselves into believing that we are not now doing what we have for so long condemned others for doing. Integrity is more important than orthodoxy. When it comes to things like seminaries, missionary societies and organs, that which matters most is *intention.* Are we motivated by a desire to build the kingdom of God on earth or to promote the interests of our own party? Do we condemn others for practices that we find ways to justify when we want to do the same things? Is it a matter of what God wills or what we want?

One of the ancient manuscripts, codex Ephraemi I believe it is, has Jesus saying something that seems to be relevant to all this. Jesus sees a man working on the sabbath and says to him: "If you know what you are doing, blessed are you; if not, you are a wretched man and cursed.'"

— *The Editor*

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TEXAS TEXTBOOKS AND EVOLUTION

Robert R. Meyers

Many who read this journal will know already of the textbook furor now in full swing in Texas and of the involvement of the Churches of Christ in the fray. Major newswire services have identified the Church of Christ by name as the major opposition to the books, even though some other religious groups have objected to them.

The texts are biology studies and are published by three of the most prominent companies in the textbook business. The Commissioner of Education approved them for use in different grades throughout the state. The passages objected to are those which teach evolution and do not acknowledge the dissenting opinions of many Christians.

According to the October 2 issue of the *Christian Chronicle, a* newspaper of the Churches of Christ, many members of that body wrote letters to the State Commissioner, but their letters "were in effect discounted because many of the objectors had not actually read the books."

Recognizing that the pressure would have to be more concerted and official, the elders of the Abilene Christian College congregation named three of their number to read the passages and make a recommendation. As a result, the entire eldership wrote to the Commissioner, objecting to the books and asking that they be changed or withdrawn. The letter listed three reasons why the books should not be used in their present form.

The elders say that the books violate the student's right to be provided with all the facts on the subject of evolution. They argue that the books give only statements made by proponents of the theory. They lament that no mention is given to the Biblical account of the creation of the world and all its plants and animals.

I would agree this far with the elders: the books ought to present evolution as a *theory* for explaining the development of living things. It is certainly misleading if the books state flatly that evolution is a proved fact. Unlike some theories, evolution can hardly be verified by demonstration in a laboratory. If the editors of the texts believe that evolution is the most plausible theory known to them, and accords best with the evidence available, they have a right to say so. If they were disposed, in addition, to be eminently fair, they should add that many Christians accept the Genesis account of creation as a *literal* story, and that for these persons the theory of evolution contradicts the Bible.

Bur as for the elders' claim that students should get all the facts, I am puzzled. How would it be possible to put all relevant data on this matter into a survey text on biology? I do not know whether the elders know what a mass of data is available; in any event, their request seems unreasonable to me. The editors of the texts surely know that they cannot print every piece of evidence ever found which seems to support evolution. So they print what they believe to be the majority opinions of scientific experts who have studied the data.

This is common custom. I can pick up any textbook in my college and show that it is filled with such conclusions. The test of such a book is not that it has assumptions and generalizations, but whether those authorities it quotes carry enough weight to make the assumptions worthy of acceptance, or at least of serious study.

The second reason given by the elders is astonishing. They say that the books "fail to provide a challenge to the development of critical thinking since they use many non-positive statements." Please re-read this observation. The argument is that students learn to think critically only when all the statements they hear are positive. This is incredible, and I would not have believed it if I had not seen it. Even now I wonder why faculty members at Abilene Christian were not asked to help the elders with their statement; surely *they* would never have allowed such a remark to pass into print.

For the very opposite is true. Students *must* be exposed to non-positive statements *in order* to learn critical thinking. If all statements are positive, absolute and final, students have no reason to suppose that there is any need for critical thinking. The thing to do in that case is to listen carefully to what the teacher says, and memorize every word. One can make an "A" that way, perhaps, but it is not the road to critical thinking.

The truth is that the texts in question are doing on this matter exactly what we want them to do. The elders quote some of the non-positive statements: "So far as we know . . . All the evidence at our disposal confirms . . . The one thing we can be relatively sure about . . . " This indicates that the editors make at least some attempt to avoid absolute statements and to show the tentative nature of some of their conclusions. They are encouraging students to realize that they muse think for themselves.

Since we are getting credit for opposing the textbooks in Texas, 1 think it may be time for us to face up to diversity of opinion among ourselves on this issue. 1 know from personal experience that many men in high places in the Churches of Christ are much less hostile to the theory of evolution than the Texas warfare suggests. 1 have had friends on Christian college faculties who felt that it was possible to accept the evolutionary theory as probable and still believe firmly in God. 1 have friends now, in colleges and in Church of Christ pulpits, who do not feel that one abolishes God as creator the moment he accepts the possibility that life may have evolved from lower forms to higher. It would be healthy for the Church of Christ if such men could explain why they feel this way, so that our religious journals could share their views with readers. Even in Abilene Christian College itself there are learned Christian gentlemen who believe that evolution and faith in God are reconcilable. Why do they not speak out right now? We need not believe them, but we ought to know that we are not united on this issue even in our own religious body.

This is probably a good place to say that anyone who reads the Genesis account *literally* will have to fight to the death against the evolutionary hypothesis. But many in the Church of Christ do not read the first chapters of the Bible literally, and they therefore find

no insoluble contradiction between the theory of evolution and faith in God as creator of life. All such people should speak out, even at the risk of loss of prestige. It is becoming more and more imperative that we stop trying to impose upon the world a monolithic image of ourselves. Our differences of opinion, which really do exist, will not harm us by being aired. Instead, they will suggest that we are a body of free truth-seekers, not always in agreement but always honoring one another's enquiries and convictions.

The *Firm Foundation*, edited by Reuel Lemmons in Austin, Texas, is leading the textbook battle. Those readers who have written letters to the editor have been overwhelmingly in favor of banning the books or getting them changed. There is, moreover, the faintest premonition of a new witch-hunt. One writer points out that although "the Lord's people" may nor know it, "one of the scientists who originally reviewed" one of the books "is an elder in a congregation of the church of Christ in a midwestern city."

Another writer says: "I am very disappointed in your stand on Biology textbooks, and I wanted you to know that all the members of the church of Christ are not with you. Evolution is the very basis of biology." The writer signs his name as a member of the University Church of Christ in Austin. Underneath his letter, the editor has printed in boldface type: *Wake up, sleeping brethren, it is later than you think.*

There is a touch of the ominous here. If how one feels about the evolution theory is to become a test of orthodoxy, we may be in for rough days in the next decade. I repeat these personal feelings: evolution should be presented only as a theory, not as a proved fact; members of the Church of Christ should acquaint themselves with the nature and amount of the evidence which causes many to hold the theory as highly plausible; and members of the Church of Christ should know that there are many shades of opinion on this matter among their numbers.

— 867 Spaulding, Wichita, Kan.

"The unexamined life is not worth living — *Socrates*.

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EDITORIAL NOTES

I wish to thank our readers who have contributed articles and sent letters to Truth Seekers' FORUM, and those who have expressed interest in other ways. Your response has been encouraging. We have had some negative comments, but most have been of the sympathetic sort; we welcome both. I would like to renew the invitation to all readers to submit any material which they believe to be of importance. The most suitable items should be brief (one or two double-spaced, typewritten pages) and must be written in a constructive spirit.

Please note the change of address for this column, as follows: Curtis H. Lydic, Box 5071, NTSU Station, Denton, Texas. Please send all materials and correspondence to that address.

FREEDOM, THEN WHAT?

I am disturbed by a phenomenon which seems to be attendant in some cases upon the liberation of the spirit which comes from honest reexamination of things believed and the rejection of human authority. It seems highly regrettable to me if one succeeds only in exchanging one sort of error for another. Some have said that those who think as we do have done just that; we would like to hope that with God's merciful assistance we might avoid the second error. But I believe that some of my brothers have graduated from one error to another, and I hope that I may be able to define the problem, as I see it, with sufficient clarity and force to cause others to consider the matter seriously.

A common element in the experience of many who have lived a number of years in association with Church of Christ organization, teaching, and leadership policy is *disillusionment.* As a younger man I taught, and easily accepted, that the organized Church of Christ was identical with that universal fellowship of the saved which is referred to in the scriptures as "the church." Accordingly, I spoke publicly in these terms and conducted myself in relations with our "denominational friends" as a spokesman for the "true way" to which they all needed to turn. Also, I was exceedingly impressed by the fine and honest concern for the truth which my brethren manifested. "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent." "Come, and let us reason together." "The Church of Christ urges you to investigate its claims." I was conditioned by this kind of reverence

for truth to *be* open-minded, and to enter upon study and discussion with what at least approached nonbias (we were always cautioning these "denominational friends" to watch those "preconceived ideas."

The natural result of all this was disappointment, when it became evident that the invitation to subject the claims of the Church of Christ to critical review was a diplomatic device designed to entice people into discussions in which, since we were right and they were wrong, the only change of convictions must be on their part. Members of the Church of Christ who essay a similar critical examination of the church's doctrines or policies soon learn that this indulgence is not meant for them. They learn, in fact, that such examination is risky; it can be conducted with complete impunity only if it leads to no negative conclusions.

In a church where individual liberty is taught and claimed as fact for public purposes, it is natural that some disgust should arise upon discovering that this kind of liberty is theoretical only. Then, when attempts are made to act and speak as a free man, only to result in reprisals of one kind or another, it is equally natural for one to denounce the whole system and resolve to have no part of it from then to eternity. I am sure that large numbers of Christians have found themselves so inclined, after years of frustration and grief.

The thing which troubles me about this is that the *natural* reaction to such experience may not be the *right* reaction in *spiritual* terms. It may be understandable without being justifiable. I know of at least three cases in which the course of action seems to be quite negative, in which, apparently, the brotherly relationship (with attendant obligations) is repudiated. In such a case, it seems to me, one has escaped from one unfortunate ensnarement only to become captive to another; namely irresponsibility. I think I have seen signs of a sort of scholarly interest in the pros and cons of Church-of-Christism, in these who have fled from it, but without a real, personal concern. There is, apparently, a reluctance to get involved with "the church" again, having wriggled free from its peculiar yoke. It is so much easier to say, "Uh, uh. I've had my share of 'churchanity', and I'll be on my own from here, if you don't mind." It actually is more pleasant and stimulating, I suppose, to resort to a more private contemplation of truth and to share thoughts with one or two others, occasionally, who "speak the same language." It is, as I have suggested, understandable that one would feel this way; but is it right, is it in keeping with Christian values, to follow such a course? I think that it is not.

What is the good of having passed through the mist of ignorance into the light of new knowledge if in so doing one leaves behind the sort of concern for his brethren and the sort of sympathetic understanding which are both necessary if his new knowledge is to have any constructive potential? Had Jesus experienced that sort of "graduation" his death would have been in vain. Unless one considers himself *no longer a Christian*, rather than

no longer Church-of-Christ, how can he fail to have an abiding, motivating concern for those of God's people who are still trying to see through "the veil of Moses"? Beloved brother, when you have passed beyond the kind of love which would forbid personal detachment, you have passed beyond Christ. What of those who still labor under the false values of legalism or partyism? There, but for the grace of God, you would be; have you no obligation to them? Choose whether you will help your "neighbor" in the ditch, fallen there by blind leadership, or will "pass by on the Other side." — *FORUM Editor*

ON BEING SHUTOUT

Recently a local newspaper carried a large advertisement for a large local Church of Christ which consisted mainly of a welcome to university students returning at the end of the summer. The reader was told that there were four congregations of the church of Christ in the city, and the four were named. This announcement is of special interest to some of us because of the fact that there are actually several more than "four congregations" in this city, at least three in addition to those named. The writer or writers of the advertisement were not unaware of the existence of these other congregations; they would simply rather not admit their *existence*. It is a simple matter of some Christians refusing to recognize the Christianity of others, much as our government sometimes refuses to grant official recognition to another government for diplomatic purposes. As a member of one of the three congregations not mentioned, I think I get the point. It is the same old story; because I do not belong to the party represented by the advertisement I am not to be counted as a Christian. The congregation which does not adhere to the party line is not to be counted as a "church of Christ." Surely there are going to be some surprised looks when the Lord comes to claim *all* his own.

— *FORUM Editor*

REACTIONS TO READING

Brother LaVern Houtz, Professor of History at Southeastern Christian College, Winchester, Kentucky, is the author of a booklet entitled *A History of the Premillenial Churches of Christ.* The material was originally presented as a series of lectures at the Church of Christ Bible Chair at Hammond, Louisiana, and the booklet is published by the Bible Chair.

The booklet, 43 pages in length, is a very readable and interesting summary of the persistence of fundamentalist churches through the Middle Ages, and of the development of the premillenial Church of Christ fellowship as an outgrowth of the Restoration Movement of the 19th Century. Brother Houtz is known as a mature and sensible leader in the church and as a very able teacher. In his review of the events which led to the division

between those of the premillenial and amillenial persuasions he is altogether fair and kind, and not one word is said which would be offensive to even the most touchy of those who oppose the premillenial position.

This book is worthwhile reading for anyone interested in the background of present day churches, and should be considered a must for those members of amillenial Churches of Christ who do not know what premillenialism really is (there are too many of us who have been opposed to it but who could not define it if it were a matter of life or death). Brother Houtz's treatment is not a short course in the premillenial point of view, nor is it propagandistic, but it *will* serve to help one understand why there is such a viewpoint and what part it has had in the history of modern Churches of Christ. — *FORUM Editor*

THE UNIVERSAL COHESIVE

Water is called "the universal solvent." A solvent is an agent which has the ability to dissolve a substance. Water is the universal solvent because so many substances will dissolve in it. Dissolution involves the breaking down of a substance, or causing the particles of that substance to separate. For example, when water is removed from a saline solution by evaporation, the particles cohere and form crystals; if water is then added again, the crystals disintegrate into smaller particles once more.

The element with which we are concerned in this discussion is in one sense a solvent and in another a cohesive, in spiritual matters. That element is love.

Love is a solvent in that it dissolves the toxins which find their way into the spiritual body; toxins such as pride, hatred, fear, envy all things we are familiar with. In the presence of love these things shrink as the demons shrank in the presence of the Son of God. Even party spirit cannot flourish or live in the atmosphere of love.

Love is a cohesive — *the great cohesive* — in that it can bind together where nothing else can. A column of bricks will stand without mortar if the column is not too high and if it is not disturbed. This is because the bricks, being identical, fit rather well together. This is unity through conformity, and though it may look very neat it is very susceptible to destruction by the least jarring or turn of the wind. With the proper use of mortar, stones may be built together which are quite unlike one another in form, and can constitute a very sturdy column indeed. These stones are bound together by a special agent, and so men may be bound together by love when there seems to be little else to unite them; Jew and Greek, black and white, conservative and liberal — *FORUM Editor*

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BOOK NOTES

BACK ISSUES

These are available at the rate of 3 for $1.00; monthly issues are all available (Vol. 6) at 10 cents each.

Vol. 4, No.1, Winter, 1962 — Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Campbell: A Study of Two Old Virginians, by the editor.

Vol. 4, No.2, Spring, 1962 — The Role of John T. Johnson in the Restoration Movement; the Church of Billie Sol Estes (both by the editor).

Vol. 4, No.3, Summer, 1962 — A Church of Christ Shibboleth (Meyers), What Kind of Unity Do We Seek (Thompson), The Search for the Good Man (Garrett).

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Vol. 5, No.4, Fall, 1963 — James A. Garfield: Campbellite President (Garrett), Our Need for Self-Criticism (Meyers).

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RESTORATION REVIEW is published monthly (except July and August) at 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas. Leroy Garrett, Editor. Second class permit at Denton, Texas. Subscription rate is $1.00 per annum; 50 cents in clubs of 6 or more.

Address all mail to: 1201 Windsor Drive, Denton, Texas 76201.*